

SCORE 5 FOR NANCE; 2 MORE TO GO!

Chinese Soothsayer's Prediction That the Former Miss Gwyn Would Marry Seven Times and in the End Learn True Love, Is Being Brought to Pass by Her Progressive Matrimony Program.

BY WINIFRED VAN DUZER.

LOVE guards his secret. From the beginning of the ages men and maids have struggled toward his meaning; they have bartered hope and happiness and flower-fragrant past and dream-gilded future for just a little knowledge. And Love has hidden his heart in a red rose and smiled with lips inscrutable as the mystery of life.

And now has Fate, clad in black like the shadow of the unknown, met Beauty. And Fate's midnight gaze has burned into Beauty's eyes, saffron as autumn leaves, and whispered a promise; the promise of revelation.

"Thou shalt know!" warned the solemn voice. "Daughter it is thy destiny! Venus guides thee; into the world thou art to find the soul of the greatest emotion. Seven times must thou die and be reborn; death the sinking of thyself into another life, rebirth the returning consciousness of thine own ego! Thou shalt love and be beloved of seven husbands; in the end shalt beat in thy being the understanding of that which is greater than time and eternity and life and death. It is my prophecy!"

Is the prophecy working true? Out of the morning twilight, which was the future, four husbands have come and loved and been beloved and slipped into the evening twilight, which is the past. And in the blazing noon of the present stands the fifth, loving and beloved, waiting to absorb the life of Beauty into his own. Is he indeed the fifth experience of the seven that Fate promised? Now when the world has grown so prosaic that it loves figures standing evenly in a row more than sentiment, are there to be two more experiences to show her the secret that in truth guides the fashioning pen up and down the row where the figures stand most evenly?

Is Love to succumb at last to the promise of Fate and the light in autumn-hued eyes?

Beauty, whose other name is Nance Gwyn, reclined like a modernized Venus in froth of lingerie on the billowing tops of sofa-pillows, tactfully arranged. Her eyes are oval; long toward the temples with lids that droop, screening shadows of emotion with fascinating remoteness. Lights play through the saffron shades; flecks of fire like the shadow of the sun in secret places. And like autumn leaves they suggest memories of gentle, youthful, innocent spring; of gliding transition; of rose-crowned, sensual-

ipped crimson summer kisses; of the subtle whisper of September which brings wisdom. They are topaz-lids of a Pandora box, holding unguessed possibilities and always mystery and delight.

Nance Gwyn's hair is saffron, like her eyes. Every shining wave is a separate invitation; little snaring tendrils curl over the back of her firm, strong neck. Her hands taper to pink-tipped points; her tiny feet were surely arched round an inverted U. Every serpentine, undulating line of her holds the innate grace of the dancer who dances for love of rhythm and for necessity of expression.

Is Love, through the medium of seven husbands, to whisper to the most daring of American dancers the secret of his existence?

She reclined on the softest pillows of the softest divan in her New York studio and covered the edge of a cupid's-bow yawn.

"Maybe it's true!" said she. After which lights flicked the saffron and her little teeth flashed a smile.

"Sounds kind of like a rain check, doesn't it now? 'Specially as my fiancé's number is 5. Though maybe the old geek in the black nightgown didn't slip it straight. He turned up in Hongkong, said he was press-agenting for fate or somebody. Promised me a seven-phenated name and a husband I could love when the smoke had cleared. Said I was put into the world to learn the secret of love. Understand quite a crowd of young men and women—and men and women not so young—are holding their breath till they see what I find out."

"Maybe Janli Scharzidi was right. He was spooky enough to maintain telephone connections with heaven and hell. Can't say whether it's taking or not—yet. But here's my perfume word that I feel a lot more knowing than I did that day in Hongkong. I was on my first honeymoon trip then."

It was very recently that Mrs. Evelyn Simmons of Huntington, L. I., announced the engagement of the eccentric and spectacular dancer, who is her

sister. It wasn't part of the announcement, but word went out that Collins Sutor Hill of Cape Town, Africa, is a retired mining operator of independent wealth. Other word went out that the very sound "stage" makes him ill, and that even ballroom dancing excites his sternest disapproval. And went round the memory of a party that Edmund Russell gave in his oriental studio three years back; a party attended by 500 or more guests, many of whom wrote "princess," "count," "marquise" and such things before their names and at which Gaby Deslys, Beatrice Lova and Nance Gwyn executed poses and steps that caused the less daringly artistic to gasp for air. The feature of the entertainment was the rose-leaves dance by Miss Gwyn which she executed in filmy lavender and showering leaves. Went round the memory and a smile.

Nance Gwyn poked the pink tip of her tongue at the smile. "Mean things!" she pouted. "They don't seem to understand that this is different! Just to show how different it is there's my engagement present—not a threadbare old solitaire at all but a pair of dogs, darling Pekinese. They are Princess Fil and Princess Tru. They are twins. And they look so much alike that Fil must wear a coronet set with an immense turquoise and Tru must wear a diamond bracelet so that I can tell them apart. Their jewels are wonderful!"

"We won't have an engagement party. The idea of champagne, and there's no such thing as a party without it, makes me sick. I have given away all my dancing costumes and jewels. World capitals will see me no more. I am serious at last for I am convinced that he is the only man that ever understood me. If this is to be only another experience—the fifth, like the soothsayer said—it will at least give me the knowledge of being a serious wife."

"We learn," she said fatalistically. "Honestly now, I believe I've learned from each!"

blooded Hindoo and he had the whitest teeth I have ever seen."

"He didn't carry a crystal or sand-bag. He just studied my hand and looked down into my eyes with his strange gleaming ones; looked right through my being. Then he made his prophecy."

"My daughter, you were put into the world to discover the secret of love, the true inner meaning of the greatest emotion. Venus is your guiding star. You will love and be loved many times. You will marry seven husbands and only in the seventh will you find the joy and peace your heart is seeking. To no one of the others will your nature respond perfectly. You are one of the few who will learn what love really is, and you will find at last that it is more of the mind than of the material body."

"He said it so slowly and impressively that I've always remembered," said Nance Gwyn soberly. "I laughed then. But it was partly at David. He was so angry. He grabbed my arm and rushed me out of the bazar and back to the hotel. 'I'd like to see you with any husband but me,' he roared. Two months later the poor boy was dead. And I learned from him!"

The next matrimonial experience wasn't of so much importance because of its brevity, Miss Gwyn said. "I married Eric Traffordwy because he said somebody ought to take care of me. I sort of thought so too. And when he died I remembered that old prophet's remarks and made up my mind I'd never marry again. I seemed to be a hoodoo on husbands. Eric knew about the prophecy, but he said he didn't mind. He was a dear, too. I learned from him!"

The beginning of the third venture was on a liner bound for Australia. Thomas Caffrey, an Irishman, was his name. "I said, half in joke, 'If I ever marry anybody I'll marry you.' For two years he followed me over the world on the strength of that idle remark. I simply had to reward such perseverance."

"I was divorced from him. I'm awfully careless about money matters, and he just couldn't get used to me. I learned a lot from him!"

Husband—or experience—No. 4 was Charles Romer Williams, former British army officer and London art dealer. And Englishmen are just perfectly dreadful persons to marry, according to the little lady with the marrying habit.

"Anything on earth he'll do for you before he gets you, but afterward he thinks it's enough to give you two black

dressess and the honor of being his wife. I have a baby daughter as the result of the last marriage. The Hindoo prophesied that I'd have three, but I'd like about fifty. None of my husbands has cared for children, and I positively will not marry another man who isn't devoted to them."

Miss Gwyn agreed to accept \$33,000 in lieu of permanent alimony at the time of her divorce from Williams. "But I learned from him," she declared.

It was after her divorce last year that Nance Gwyn set forth a list of specifications for No. 5.

"My ideal husband is an American," she said. "By profession he's an author, with an income of \$50,000 a year. He is a brunette. He won't wear lavender ties and he will always have his shoes polished. He mustn't have a grouch in the morning. He must love me and he must love children."

"Collins Sutor Hill," she explained after the announcement of her last engagement, "is the son of an American who married a Spanish lady. He is thirty-five, delightfully dark, and an amateur boxer. He is famed in the clubs of Cape Town and South Africa. Hill's photo bears a striking resemblance to a noted opera tenor."

Reclining on the lace-flecked billows of sofa-pillows, with lights playing through the saffron ovals of her eyes, Mrs. Nance Stuart-Traffordwy-Caffrey-Williams admitted that life for her is just one husband after another.

"The business of wifery swallows up most of my time," she said regretfully. "and that fatalistic old spook said I'd never be satisfied until I met up with No. 7. 'Only in the seventh will you find the joy and peace your heart is seeking; to no one of the others will your nature respond perfectly,' was what he said. So why worry? It looks as though destiny had things all worked out for me; as though every one of the preliminary husbands would have to be worked off the docket before No. 7 can be reached. Remembering what my name has been is my greatest concern in moments alone."

"And there's always a chance that the prophecy wasn't true. Each final one may be perfection itself. Mr. Hill is Mr. Rightman, perhaps, spite of ghosts and hobgoblins."

"Anyway, I expect to learn from him!"



NANCE GWYN.

